

Columbia County Growth Management Plan Update

Community Agenda



October XX, 2005

DRAFT
FOR REVIEW PURPOSES ONLY

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Community Agenda

As noted in The Community Assessment, the Community Agenda identifies the near-term and long-term critical planning strategies for the county. These planning strategies are intended to help guide the location and design of development within the county and support the character guidelines for specific areas of the county. The goal and policies expressed in the Community Agenda identify how Columbia County will address demands associated with future anticipated population growth while supporting the overall vision for the county.

1.0 Community Vision

1.1 General Vision Statement

The vision statement for the Growth Management Plan Update reflects the hopes and the desires of the residents with respect to the future development of the county. Based on Columbia County's overall vision and mission, the Growth Management Plan vision incorporates more detail on key growth issues such as housing, economic development, transportation, and the environment. This vision was developed as a cooperative effort of the Growth Management Plan Steering Committee, the community, and Columbia County staff.

The vision addresses the desire to balance Columbia County's quiet residential nature with continuing commercial and economic development. By clear-sighted planning for the location, arrangement, and design of growth, Columbia County can successfully balance its various land use needs. The refined vision statement is as follows:

In the year 2025, Columbia County will be a blend of premier communities in which to invest, live, work, and raise a family, organized into quiet residential neighborhoods and active multi-use community nodes. It will be a place where residents enjoy a rich quality of life based on the availability of excellent education, a range of housing options, first rate shopping and entertainment, progressive employment opportunities, a network of effective transportation alternatives, abundant natural resources, ample community facilities and recreational amenities, and a variety of arts and culture.

1.2 Future Development Map

1.2.1 Nodal Development Concept

The Nodal Development Concept is a plan to organize more intense land uses into nodes, and thus protecting existing neighborhoods, lessening sprawl, and making the most efficient use of existing infrastructure. Most new commercial, office, mixed-use, and multifamily residential development is planned for designated nodes.

Nodes have been placed predominantly where major infrastructure exists and in the more developed parts of the county. All nodes are placed at existing intersections, usually of two major roads. Most of the proposed nodes currently have access to water and sewer infrastructure.

The nodal development concept is not new, but has been part of Columbia County's Growth Management Plan for 10 years. The current plan has placed more of an emphasis on how nodes should function and on developing policies to help implement the concept. Two nodes have specific development plans – the Evans Town Center area and the Martinez area. Both of these node-specific plans give recommended guidance on urban design and land use patterns within the nodes, as well as proposed infrastructure projects to enhance the quality of the nodes. In general it is recommended that node-specific plans be developed for all Tier I and Tier II nodes.

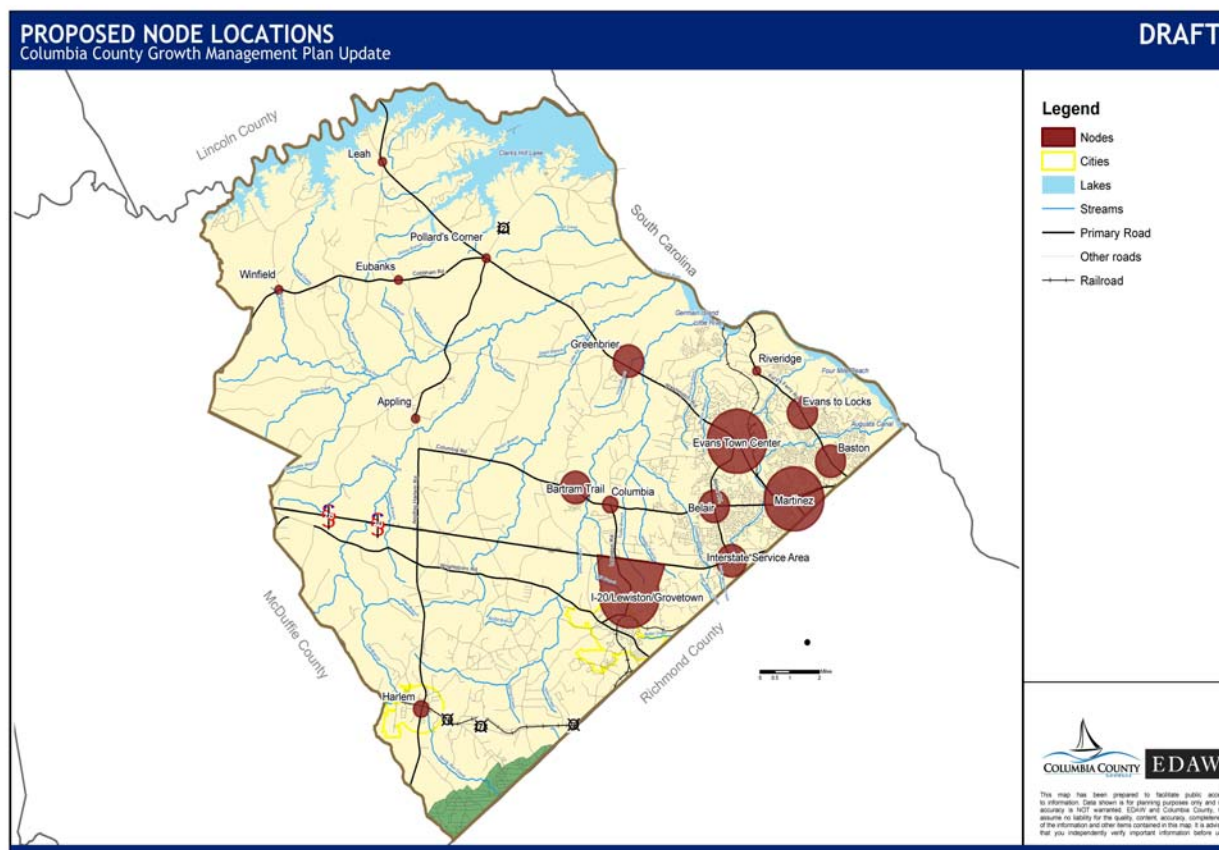
Nodes come in four sizes called Tiers. The largest nodes are called Tier I nodes. These nodes can contain the widest variety of land uses – retail, office/professional, civic, and multifamily residential. Tier I nodes should contain the largest amount of development in terms of acreage and square feet, and are generally about 2 miles in diameter. Commercial development within Tier I nodes can be very large in scale and attract a market from the entire county and possibly beyond from neighboring counties. Major destinations within the county, including major civic facilities, are best located within Tier I nodes. The Tier I nodes are Evans Town Center, Martinez, and Lewiston/Grovetown.

Tier II nodes are the second largest nodes. Tier II nodes can contain retail, office/professional, civic, and dense residential land uses such as townhomes. Generally Tier II nodes will have less acreage and less commercial square feet than Tier I nodes and are generally about 1 mile in diameter. Also, big box stores that draw from a regional market are not appropriate for Tier II nodes. The Tier II nodes include Baston, Evans to Locks, Belair, Greenbrier, and the Interstate Service Area. The Bartram Trail node is not currently appropriate for development, but as the residential population around Bartram Trail develops and as Columbia County's population grows this will be a good future location for a node.

Tier III nodes are the third largest nodes, and are primarily intended to serve the retail needs of adjacent neighborhoods. Tier III nodes should be modest in scale and acreage, providing services such as groceries and other neighborhood conveniences, and are generally contained within a ½ mile diameter. The scale of development should be neighborhood-sized, attracting residents from just a few miles around. Some office and civic development can be an adjunct to the neighborhood services in Tier III nodes. Tier III nodes include Columbia, and Harlem. New large-scale residential developments can be planned to have a Tier III node integrated as a small 'village' center into the development.

Tier IV nodes are the smallest nodes, and are only planned for rural areas. These nodes should consist of just a handful of convenience services, such as gas stations, small restaurants, and convenience stores. They should only contain a few acres of commercial activity, all contained within a ¼ diameter. Tier IV nodes include Appling, Eubanks, Riveridge, Winfield, Pollard's Corner, and Leah. These nodes for Columbia County are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Node Locations



Complementing the nodal development policy is a node buffer policy. This policy states that commercial development is to be discouraged immediately outside the nodes, as this undermines the integrity of the planned nodes. This buffer policy means that commercial development will be discouraged along major arterials between nodes. Generally the non-competition buffer around a node should be about 1 mile beyond the edge of the node. For Tier I nodes, larger buffers may be necessary.

Although land use along major arterials is often dominated by commercial development, Columbia County does not intend to encourage this pattern. The dominant planned land use between nodes along major arterials is residential. Single family residential can be developed along major arterials so long as the development is oriented away from major corridors and buffered with walls and

a planted buffer. Multifamily residential is appropriate along major corridors in proximity to Tier I and Tier II nodes. Concentrating multifamily development along corridors may help support future transit lines. Careful attention must be paid to create a street-oriented design for multifamily residential in major corridors. Finally, linear open space uses are also appropriate for major corridors, although these may be difficult to implement in terms of land acquisition.

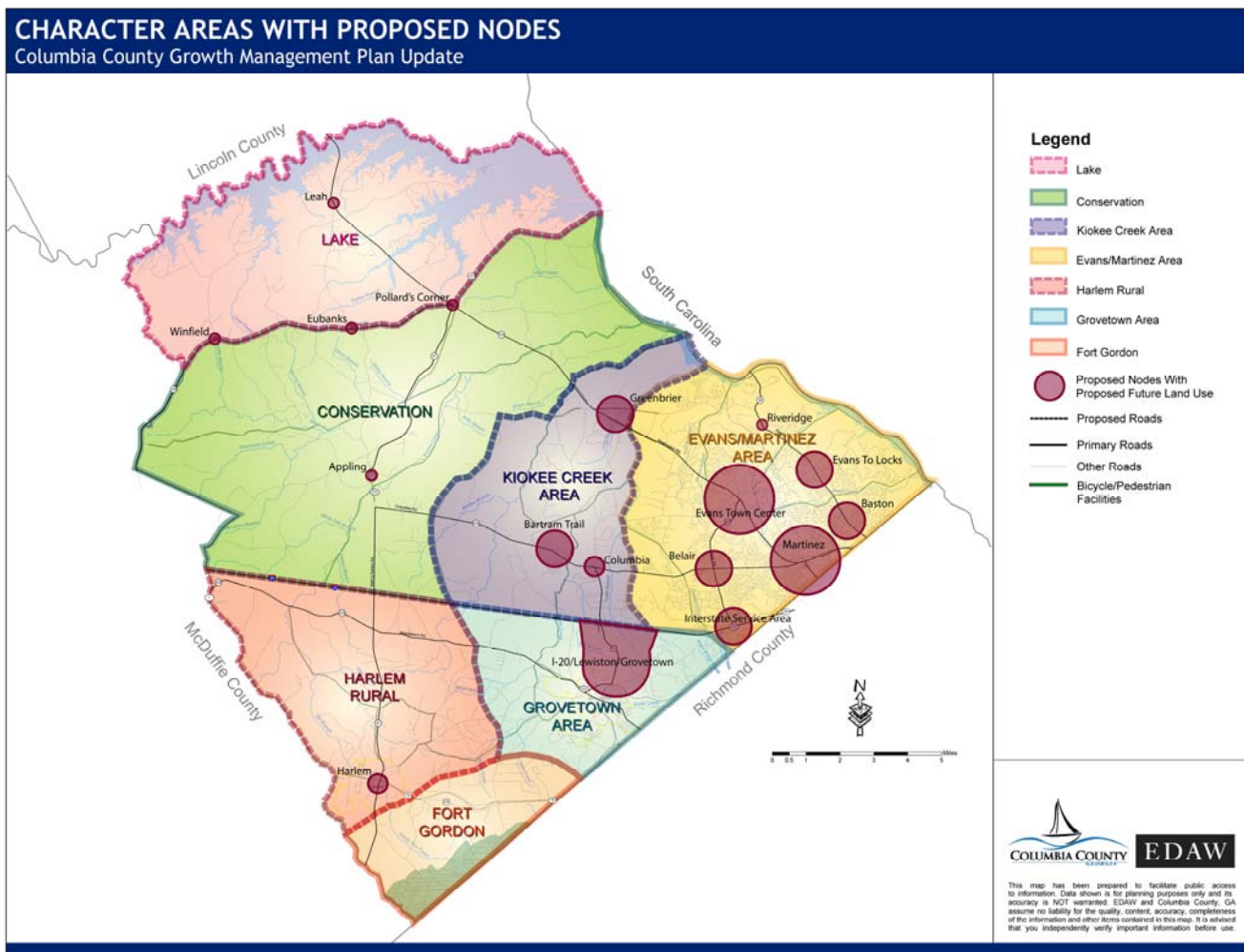
As growth in the county continues, it may become necessary to ‘promote’ nodes from a less intense to a more intense Tier. The primary growth policy of the county is to promote growth within existing Tier I nodes without extending their geographic size (diameter). This will help create an efficient, concentrated, mixed-use development pattern and limit the impacts of future growth on existing single family neighborhoods.

Nodes may be promoted to larger tiers when they are built-out (when all commercially zoned land has been developed). Nodes that will be considered for promotion should display a balance of commercial, office, civic, and dense residential uses. If these uses are out of balance, increasing the size of the node may exacerbate this problem. Nodes should have an efficient transportation structure before they are promoted, meaning that they have a high degree of interconnectivity that creates alternate transportation routes and prevents overloading existing arterials. Node promotion is only appropriate in areas that have experienced significant population growth in the immediate surroundings and where appropriate infrastructure exists or can be developed in a timely manner.

1.3 Character Areas

Much of the future land use was shaped by the visions for each of the character areas, described in Section 2.0 and illustrated in Figure 2. The Evans-Martinez, Kiokee Creek, and Grovetown Character Areas are the urban growth character areas. These areas are planned for significant new development and infrastructure extensions as appropriate. The Harlem, Fort Gordon, Conservation, and Lake Thurmond Character Areas are planned as predominantly rural character areas, with little planned infrastructure extension and future growth.

Figure 2 Character Areas



1.4 Future Land Use and Development

The Future Land Use Map reflects the vision and goals for each of the character areas. Major nodes are centered on the Evans-Martinez, Kiokee Creek, and Grovetown Character areas. Major new residential growth is also planned for these character areas. The rural character areas are predominantly planned for rural residential, forestry, and recreational land uses. See Figure 3.

Future land use demand is presented in the Community Assessment section of the document in the Land Use chapter. Future land use demand predicts how many acres of various types of development Columbia County will need based on projected population and employment growth.

The future land use map assigns enough land in each development category to meet projected demand. There are two exceptions to this rule. Recreational lands are not assigned in the future land use map because the acquisition of greenspace and recreational lands will need to be strategically decided as opportunities become available and as needs become apparent in accordance with the guidelines in the Greenspace Master Plan. Low density residential is under-allocated because residential lands are permitted to be developed at lower densities. Therefore excess medium density residential lands can be developed at lower densities if this is what the market demands. Providing excess medium density residential also allows the county to promote its goals of affordable housing and creating a properly located, adequate population base to sustain each of the planned development nodes.

Table 1			
Comparison of Future Land Use Allocation vs. Demand, County-Wide			
Future Land Use Categories	Future Land Use Proposed Acres	Future Land Use Proposed Percent	Future Land Use Demand
agriculture/forestry	40,305	20.5%	0
commercial	2,732	1.4%	2,514
industrial	5,980	3.0%	3,678
office/professional	796	0.4%	745
public/institutional	4,586	2.3%	1,898
recreation - active*	570	0.3%	1,316
recreation - passive	11,388	5.8%	0
residential - high density	2,483	1.3%	904
residential - low density	25,672	13.0%	25,618
residential - medium density	23,125	11.7%	19,889
residential - recreational	7,081	3.6%	0
residential - rural	52,864	26.9%	0
residential - very high density	370	0.2%	0
Road	7,118	3.6%	0
transportation/communication/utilities	572	0.3%	0
undeveloped vacant land	280	0.1%	0
undeveloped water	10,901	5.5%	0
TOTAL	196,824	100.0%	

Some highlights of the Growth Management Plan's 2025 future land use:

- 20,000 acres of new development and redevelopment are projected. Most new developed land will be consumed by single family homes – approximately 76% of new development acreage.
- Approximately 59% of the county will remain in rural land uses in 2025.
- Intensive land uses, such as commercial development, are focused on the nodes.

As mentioned in the nodal development concept section, most commercial, office, and civic uses are planned to occur within the proposed nodes.

Residential development is concentrated on the eastern half of the county. More specifically, residential development radiates out from planned nodes, with medium density residential on the immediate edge of nodes and lower density residential beyond. Lower density residential is planned predominantly for the western edge of urbanized development in the county, in the vicinity of the Savannah River, and east of Grovetown. Some low density residential is planned for the rural nodes of Harlem, Appling, and Pollards Corner.

Industrial uses are concentrated in just a few industrial districts. Near Grovetown, there is the industrial district that contains Horizon Industrial Park on both sides of I-20. Other industrial districts include one just west of Bartram Trail on Columbia Road, one at the Appling-Harlem exit off I-20, and a small one east of the city of Harlem. These industrial districts provide central, easily accessible locations within the county.

Recreational residential is planned for lands immediately beyond the public lands ringing Lake Thurmond. These lands will have the best access to Lake Thurmond's recreational resources.

Forest and rural residential uses predominate in the west of the county in the rural character areas. Forest lands are mostly north of I-20. South of I-20 is predominantly rural residential land.

State Quality Community Objectives

This section recaps the State of Georgia's planning objectives, and the effectiveness of current policy and administration in Columbia County in meeting these objectives. These state objectives are known as "Quality Community Objectives" and are intended to apply to every community as they develop their comprehensive plan. These objectives were also presented as part of the Community Assessment and they are repeated here since they serve as the basis for the Community Character Area Narratives that are presented in the following this section.

Regional Identity Objective: Regions should promote and preserve an "identity," defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

With the recent development of Savannah Rapids Park and Pavilion, Columbia County has contributed to the region's sense of history, identity, and place. This important park preserves historic structures and helps to tell the story of how the Savannah River played a crucial role in the early development of the region.

Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

Columbia County has been largely pro-active in putting in place the infrastructure for growth. The water and sewer systems have been expanded to meet future needs. A recently enacted stormwater management program has helped to address some of the problems of recent rapid growth. The weakest link of Columbia County's infrastructure may be the road system, which requires improvements to keep up with development pressures.

Appropriate Businesses Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

Columbia County has sought out economic development in key regional industries, including manufacturing and medical services. Columbia County should carefully consider opportunities to plug into regional strengths and to continue to develop a high-skill, high-wage workforce.

Educational Opportunities Objective: Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

With a strong public school system and the recent planned addition of a campus from Augusta Technical College, Columbia County is offering strong educational and training opportunities to its citizens.

Employment Options Objective: A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

Columbia County has a relatively small economic base with employment that is largely driven by serving the needs of the local population. Columbia County's economic development strategy will need to adapt to its growing prominence in the economy of the region. Columbia County is already beginning to see economic diversification, as medical employment growth is taking a foothold in the county.

Heritage Preservation Objective: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

Historic preservation has lagged in Columbia County without an entity to oversee historic preservation efforts. One bright spot is the City of Harlem that has recently completed an historic survey and is currently applying for historic district status for its downtown. Columbia County has been proactive in preserving Heggie's Rock and other notable natural features, including the Savannah River.

Open Space Preservation Objective: New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

Columbia County has a strong and recently developed greenspace plan and parks master plan. The county has been making steady progress on implementing these plans with the acquisition of new greenspaces for preservation and recreation.

Columbia County's development patterns tend to favor low-density, large lot development that consumes land rapidly. Recently residential developments have taken advantage of conservation subdivision provisions to set aside the more sensitive lands within a development site. Policies will be considered in the Community Agenda to encourage denser housing types.

Environmental Protection Objective: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Columbia County has numerous environmental protection policies in place, including river corridor protection, a tree protection ordinance, a soil erosion ordinance, a flood protection ordinance, and site plan and engineering review. Columbia County does lack some important environmental protection ordinances, notably a groundwater recharge protection ordinance and an aquifer protection ordinance.

Regional Cooperation Objective: Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.

Regional cooperation is a challenge in the Augusta region. Columbia County is experiencing a disproportionate share of both employment and population growth, while other counties in the region are experiencing poor growth. Finding opportunities for regional cooperation will be an important goal of the Growth Management Plan Update.

Transportation Alternatives Objective: Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

Currently transportation alternatives in Columbia County are lacking. Public transit is minimal, and walking and biking facilities are generally lacking. The 2025 Transportation Plan for the county calls for a fairly extensive system of new bike lanes and the greenspace plans calls for a network of interconnected greenways. If implemented as envisioned, together these would promote a significant alternative transportation infrastructure.

Regional Solutions Objective: Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.

Generally regional solutions are not needed for most of Columbia County's current challenges.

Housing Opportunities Objective: Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

Columbia County has limited housing choices to meet the needs of its current population and current employment base. Columbia County's housing is by far the most expensive in the region. Also, the supply of attached and multifamily housing choices is limited, especially in light of the existing demographic patterns in the county.

Traditional Neighborhood Objective: Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

Traditional neighborhood development patterns, with a focus on mixing of uses, pedestrian environment, and a variety of housing types incorporated into a single development, are still rare in Columbia County. There has been some movement towards traditional neighborhood development with two planned unit developments incorporating this development pattern. Stronger policies are needed to encourage the broader application of traditional neighborhood development in subdivision design.

Infill Development Objective: Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

Columbia County recently completed a redevelopment plan for Martinez, which is served by existing infrastructure and is seeing a gradual decline. The Martinez area redevelopment plan is yet to be implemented, but is a key part of Columbia County's strategy for containing commercial growth within nodal development areas.

Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

In the 2000 Growth Management Plan, Evans Town Center was envisioned as a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly destination. There has been limited progress in creating a pedestrian environment. This is due in part to the current ordinances and design guidelines. Current guidelines are not adequate to create the sense of place that is desired for Evans Town Center because they are not based on the principles of access management and pedestrian-friendly design.

2.0 Character Area Narratives

The following section presents the county character areas including the vision for the area, the type of land uses that will support the vision and character of the area. In addition, the relevant Quality Community Objectives as defined by the Department of Community Affairs are presented and finally there are implementation measures identified for each area. These implementation measures provide specific actions to help the county establish and reinforce the character defined for each area.



Typical Character

- dense, mixed use development patterns
- pedestrian friendly
- traditional town center as the design model
- existing residential neighborhoods - quiet, suburban character - with the convenience of town center destinations close at hand

EVANS – MARTINEZ AREA VISION

Evans-Martinez will be the focal point for the county with major shopping, employment, and civic destinations attracting people from throughout Columbia County.

Appropriate Land Uses:

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Office-Professional
- Residential – Very High Density
- Residential - High Density
- Residential - Medium Density
- Recreation – Passive
- Recreation – Active

The character of the Evans – Martinez area is further defined with dense, mixed use development patterns developed in pedestrian friendly arrangements, with a traditional town center as the design model. At the same time, existing residential neighborhoods will maintain their quiet, suburban character, but with the convenience of town center destinations close at hand.

Redevelopment will be promoted to make the most efficient use of existing land. Green space and plazas will create pleasant public spaces for people to gather. Dense housing types, including multifamily housing, will be created within walking distance of shopping and employment destinations. These dense housing types will have a high-quality design. Major civic destinations, such as the current library and performing arts facility, will be located in this area, reinforcing Evans Martinez as the center for activity in the county.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to recruit businesses or identify specific civic uses as recommended in the Martinez Redevelopment Plan.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create design standards for multi-family housing including a visual guidebook of preferred development types. • Develop enhanced lighting, signage, landscaping and buffering standards for new non-residential developments in close proximity to existing residential neighborhoods.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area to tourists. • Recruit businesses and developments associated with the medical industry and related professions. • Establish standards for home based businesses that increase flexibility without detracting from the residential nature of neighborhoods.
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support Augusta Canal National Heritage Area and Pavilion.
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to protect the Savannah River Corridor. • Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the existing tree ordinance. • Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the existing soil erosion ordinance.
6.	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a bicycle network of existing and proposed on-street and proposed bike facilities. Elaborate a time frame for the development of proposed facilities. • Connect town center areas with residential areas through a network of greenways.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
	Transportation <i>Cont.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote interconnectivity between subdivisions by encouraging every subdivision to plan for long term access to two distinct arterial or collector roads. If access is not immediately available, a roadway which can be continued by later adjacent developments shall be provided. Establish a maximum length for cul-de-sacs that are not due to geographic constraints.
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and implement the Martinez Redevelopment Plan. Focus county infrastructure efforts on redevelopment of existing developed areas. Consider implementing a tax allocation district to fund the infrastructure improvements needed for the Martinez Redevelopment Plan. Target Columbia County Greenspace Program acquisitions to purchase integrated open space, recreational, and plaza areas within Martinez and Evans. Locate future public facilities that serve a county-wide population in the Evans-Martinez Character Area.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a map that clearly delineates outer edge of Evans, Martinez, and other nodes, and make this map available to property owners and developers. Rework Evans Town Center overlay to be true to traditional town center design principals as elaborated in the Evans Town Center Plan. Create streetscape standards for the Evans Town Center area that create a pleasant pedestrian experience. Identify and acquire public parking areas; Reduce on-site parking requirements; Permit shared parking arrangements. Plan for continuing development in existing nodes by conducting node specific plans for the Interstate Service Area, Belair and Columbia, and Baston Road.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and develop the nodal land use policy with buffers that provides clear guidance to the appropriate location of commercial, office, and multifamily developments. Create a new mixed-use zoning category and policies for rezoning to this category.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Evans-Martinez Character Area:

- Transportation Alternatives Objective: Because it is the most densely and intensively developed area of the county, the Evans-Martinez area is the most important area for investing in pedestrian and bicycle facilities as transportation alternatives.
- Housing Opportunities Objective: A diversity of housing types is appropriate for this character area, especially within the Evans and Martinez nodes and along major corridors.
- Growth Preparedness Objective: The County will need a new focus on investing in infrastructure to promote redevelopment, and not just investing in infrastructure to promote greenfield development. A new Evans Town Center overlay is needed to create a true town center.
- Appropriate Businesses Objective: Columbia County should focus economic development within Evans-Martinez on key sectors such as the medical industry and business services.
- Infill Development Objective: Appropriate Businesses Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
- Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.



Typical Character

- predominantly residential, but with varied lot and house sizes
- emphasize regional architectural character
- integrated small scale commercial development
- school sites and greenspace will be part of residential developments

KIOKEE CREEK AREA VISION

Kiokee Creek will incorporate the growth of new communities with master planned, mixed use developments that are modeled on traditional neighborhood development.

Appropriate Land Uses:

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Office-Professional
- Residential – Very High Density
- Residential - High Density
- Residential - Medium Density
- Recreation – Passive
- Recreation – Active

Furthermore, Kiokee Creek area development will be predominantly residential, but with varied lot and house sizes within every development and will emphasize regional architectural character. Small scale commercial development will be integrated into these communities in planned nodes. School sites and greenspace will be an integral part of residential developments in Kiokee Creek, as will pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Adjacent developments will promote connectivity both internally and externally to create alternative routes. The following implementation measures will be used to reinforce the desired community character for the area.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where feasible, negotiate the purchase of school sites within a planned large scale residential development, emphasizing the mutual benefit to the developer and the school system.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance, that requires a variety of lot and home sizes, emphasizes the pedestrian environment, and creates integrated public space and mixed use into large scale residential development. • Pedestrian infrastructure standards for non-TND developments should be as high or higher than for TND developments • Create design standards for multi-family housing including a visual guidebook of preferred development types.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing zoning rules that require a certain percentage of any major retail development to contain an office component. • Recruit businesses and developments associated with the medical industry and related professions.
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No area-specific implementation.
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Conservation Subdivisions, with fragile environmental resources such as riparian buffers remaining as part of the undeveloped land within the subdivision. • Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the existing tree ordinance • Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the existing soil erosion ordinance.
6.	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of subdivision plan review, require the designation of pedestrian and bike connections to Columbia County's planned greenway and on-road bike system. • Promote interconnectivity between subdivisions by encouraging every subdivision to plan for long term access to two distinct arterial or collector roads. If access is not immediately available, a roadway which can be continued by later adjacent developments shall be provided. • Establish a maximum length for cul-de-sacs that are not due to geographic constraints. • Install planted medians on major corridors

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
	Transportation <i>Cont.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create corridor overlays on major corridors for access management, establish minimum frontage and lots sizes for non-residential uses, require interparcel access, establish architectural controls and require planted buffers with street. • Designate a bicycle network of existing and proposed on-street and proposed bike facilities • Connect major nodes with residential areas through a network of greenways • Enforce maximum block lengths within nodes • Establish a major north-south arterial road with expansion potential between Columbia Road and Washington Road.
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer and water extensions should be focused within the Little Kiokee Creek basin to provide for future residential and commercial development. • Plan for new commercial development in nodes by conducting node specific plans for Greenbrier and Bartram Trail.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a map that clearly delineates outer edge nodes, and make this map available to property owners and developers • Create streetscape standards for all nodes that create a pleasant pedestrian experience. • Identify and acquire public parking areas; Reduce on-site parking requirements; Permit shared parking arrangements within nodes.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and develop the nodal land use policy with buffers that provides clear guidance to the appropriate location of commercial, office, and multifamily developments. • Develop enhanced lighting, signage, landscaping and buffering standards for new non-residential developments in close proximity to existing residential neighborhoods. • Create a new mixed-use zoning category and policies for rezoning to this category.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Kiokee Creek Character Area:

- Regional Identity Objective: Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.
 - Columbia County’s character will be preserved by providing a variety of traditional residential styles. The preservation of tree cover in residential development is also a defining regional feature.
- Open Space Preservation Objective: New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
 - Open space will be set aside and integrated into new developments. In particular, riparian buffers should be incorporated where possible because of their multiple environment benefits.
 - Greenways should also be incorporated, connecting residential areas into commercial nodes by bike and by foot.
- Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
 - As the area of fastest future growth, keeping pace with infrastructure needs in the Kiokee Creek area will be crucial. Transportation infrastructure will need to be improved to accommodate population growth. Schools will need to be sited within the new Kiokee Creek communities, ideally so that many students can walk or bike to school. Siting schools within new residential community will help enhance the community identity and ease transportation to and from schools.
- Traditional Neighborhood Objective: Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
 - Traditional neighborhoods will be promoted in the Kiokee Creek area, which emphasize a diversity of housing types and sizes within every residential community, connected by pedestrian friendly paths and open spaces.



Typical Character

- Rural economic activities, such as forestry, continue to operate on this land
- Large residential parcels
- Scenic by-ways
- Limited retail

CONSERVATION AREA VISION

The Conservation Area will continue to function as a valuable groundwater recharge area protecting water quality in the county.

Appropriate Land Uses:

- Forest
- Agriculture
- Industry (I-20 Area)
- Residential – Rural
- Residential – Low Density (Appling Area)
- Residential – Medium Density (Appling Area)
- Recreation – Passive (linkages to recreational areas)

The following implementation measures will be used to reinforce the desired community character for the area.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the of Army Corp of Engineer plans and consult with the Army Corp of Engineers on major county initiatives in the Lake Thurmond Character Area.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Forestry/Rural Residential zone with minimum 5 acre lots. Smaller lots would require urban infrastructure and undermine the rural nature of this area. This should be the dominant zoning category in this area.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No area-specific implementation
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Appling Area is host to significant historic sites. The area would benefit from the development of the County historic resources inventory.
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require minimum 5 acre lots due to poor soil drainage • Development and enforce a state-mandated groundwater recharge area ordinance • Development and enforce a state-mandated watershed ordinance • Designate and preserve scenic areas and corridors within the Conservation Area. A preservation plan or scenic corridor plan may be necessary for areas such as Appling.
6.	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a scenic by-way designation for Appling to Harlem. • Ensure county greenway system identifies key linkages to the conservation area – with bikeways and trails.
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sewer and water extensions will be limited service for this area, except for immediately around historic Appling.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a map that clearly delineates location of rural nodes, and make this map available to property owners and developers. Commercial development should be limited to the node intersections.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop appropriate policies for commercial development in rural nodes. • Potential development proposals should be significant employment generators.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Conservation Character Area and will be pursued:

- Environmental Protection Objective: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
 - The Conservation Area will help protect Columbia County's water quality by limiting development within the major groundwater recharge area located in this area.
- Heritage Preservation Objective: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
 - Much of Columbia County has traditionally been rural with forest cover. Preserving rural, forested areas will help Columbia County maintain its traditional character.
 - The historic county center of Appling is in the Conservation Character Area. Preserving historic Appling and its rural character is a key part of Columbia County's heritage.
- Appropriate Businesses Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
 - Prime land for industrial development is available in a small portion of the Conservation Character Area in the vicinity of the I-20 exit. Reserving this land for future industrial development will allow Columbia County to pursue its targeted strategy of enhancing its industrial base.



Typical Character

- Residential and resort options will be low-impact, low density
- Limited commercial development, just enough to meet recreational needs

LAKE THURMOND AREA VISION

The Lake Thurmond area will continue to be a largely natural environment with limited development and ample public access for recreation.

Appropriate Land Uses:

- Forest
- Agriculture
- Institutional
- Residential – Rural
- Residential – Low Density
- Recreation – Passive
- Recreation – Active

The following implementation measures are designed to support the desired character for the area.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to recruit businesses or identify specific civic uses as recommended in the Martinez Redevelopment Plan.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Forestry/Rural Residential zone with minimum 5 acre lots.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore developing a lodge and conference center in the Lake Thurmond Character Area. • A market study should be conducted to determine target markets, competition, and right-sizing for such a conference center.
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No area-specific implementation.
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and enforce a state-mandated groundwater recharge area ordinance • Development and enforce a state-mandated watershed ordinance • Designate and preserve scenic areas and corridors within the Lake Thurmond Character Area. • Scotts Ferry Road is a potential scenic corridor.
6.	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide linkages to the County greenway system to the lake area as means of promoting recreational access and alternate modes of transportation.
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public sewer and water extensions should service this area.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a map that clearly delineates location of rural nodes, and make this map available to property owners and developers. Commercial development should be limited to the node intersections.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop appropriate policies for commercial development in rural nodes.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Lake Thurmond Character Area:

- Environmental Protection Objective: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
 - The Lake Thurmond Character Area is a key county recreational resource with substantial natural beauty. Preserving its rural, forested character and high water quality are of prime importance.

Heritage Preservation Objective: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

- Much of Columbia County has traditionally been rural with forest cover. Preserving rural, forested areas will help Columbia County maintain its traditional character.

Appropriate Businesses Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

- Tourism is a significant industry in the Augusta Region, and the recreation opportunities provided around Lake Thurmond, and in Wildwood Park in particular, are a potential employment growth area for the county. Preserving the natural environment in this area is a key part of developing the tourist industry in Columbia County.



Typical Character

- Historic, small communities
- Compatible historic design
- Medium density transitions to rural densities
- Commercial centered in and around historic Harlem

HARLEM AREA VISION

The Harlem Character Area will be a rural land centered on a revitalized, historic Harlem Town Center.

Appropriate Land Uses –Outside incorporated areas:

- Forest
- Agriculture
- Industry (278 corridor)
- Institutional
- Residential – Rural
- Recreation – Passive
- Recreation – Active

New commercial uses will be focused with historic Harlem and scaled to the small community. The historic character of existing buildings will be rehabilitated, and new development will have compatible styles. Medium density residential will exist immediately outside the town center, quickly transitioning to rural densities as you leave town.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The county should invite the city of Harlem's input and participation in development review on developments of more than 10 housing units and rezonings in the vicinity of the city limits. • The county and city should work together on a plan for the Appling-Harlem Road corridor.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Forestry/Rural Residential zone with minimum 5 acre lots. Smaller lots would require urban infrastructure and undermine the rural nature of this area. This should be the dominant zoning category in this area outside incorporated areas.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia County and the City of Harlem should cross-market their cultural and recreational resources and work together on tourism initiatives.
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia County should support Harlem's efforts to establish a National Historic District in its downtown area.
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require minimum 2.5 acre lots to maintain rural character • Development and enforce a state-mandated groundwater recharge area ordinance. • Designate and preserve scenic areas and corridors within the Harlem Character Area. A rural scenic corridor plan for Appling-Harlem road should be considered as it would highlight many of the unique historic and natural resources of the county.
6.	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a scenic by-way designation for Appling to Harlem. • Establish a designated bike route connecting from Harlem Town Center to the county's planned greenway system.
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sewer and water extensions in this area should extend outward from Harlem and be provided by the City of Harlem.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the City of Harlem to adopt the county's nodal development concept. • Share best practices on node development policy with the City of Harlem.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and develop the nodal land use policy with buffers that provides clear guidance to the appropriate location of commercial, office, and multifamily developments.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Harlem Character Area and will be pursued:

- Heritage Preservation Objective: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
 - Preserving and revitalizing historic Harlem should be a goal of both the City of Harlem and Columbia County. This historic small town is one of the jewels of the county, a concrete link to small town Georgia past.
- Regional Cooperation Objective: Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.
 - Columbia County's growth management plan should reinforce Harlem's plans for the revitalization of its town center by making sure that land uses on Harlem's periphery do not compete with what the city is trying to accomplish. As a small town, Harlem should have a well-defined edge and a transition to rural countryside beyond its edge.
- Infill Development Objective: Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
 - The most efficient use of infrastructure is to encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse of Harlem's historic town center.
- Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
 - Historic Harlem has a true sense of place, with places where the community gathers and gets to know each other. Preserving the historic character and focusing on redevelopment of the town center will enhance this sense of place.



Typical Character

- Large scale commercial and industrial uses near interstate exit
- Center of Grovetown historic character as a mixed-use small town
- New commercial hub centered on the interstate and Grovetown
- New suburban residential neighborhoods

The character of the Grovetown area will be further defined with large scale commercial and industrial uses, such as big box retail stores, in the vicinity of the interstate exit, while the center of Grovetown will be restored to its historic character as a mixed-use small town. Outside of this new commercial hub centered on the interstate and Grovetown, new suburban residential neighborhoods will grow along Wrightsboro Road.

GROVETOWN AREA VISION

The Grovetown Area will be an area of major economic growth, centering on the interstate exit at I-20 and Horizon Industrial Park.

Appropriate Land Uses –Outside incorporated areas:

- Commercial (in node)
- Institutional
- Mixed Use (in node)
- Office-Professional (in node)
- Residential - High Density (in node)
- Residential - Medium Density
- Residential - Low Density
- Residential - Rural
- Recreation – Passive
- Recreation – Active

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The county should invite the city of Grovetown's input and participation in development review on developments of more than 10 housing units and rezonings in the vicinity of the city limits. • Where feasible, negotiate the purchase of school sites within a planned large scale residential development, emphasizing the mutual benefit to the developer and the school system.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop enhanced lighting, signage, landscaping and buffering standards for new non-residential developments in close proximity to existing residential neighborhoods. • Develop a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) ordinance, which requires a variety of lot and home sizes, emphasizes the pedestrian environment, and creates integrated public space and mixed use into large scale residential development. • Develop pedestrian infrastructure standards for non-TND developments should be as high or higher than for TND developments • Create design standards for multi-family housing including a visual guidebook of preferred development types.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the educational offerings of the new Columbia County branch of Augusta Technical College to both industrial employers and residents. • Developing zoning rules that require a certain percentage of any major retail development to contain an office component • Recruit businesses and developments associated with Fort Gordon.
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the City of Grovetown to identify historic structures within the city and the Grovetown area.
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and enforce a state-mandated groundwater recharge area ordinance. • Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the existing tree ordinance • Enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the existing soil erosion ordinance • Encourage Conservation Subdivisions, with fragile environmental resources such as riparian buffers remaining as part of the undeveloped land within the subdivision.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
	Transportation <i>Cont.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote interconnectivity between subdivisions by encouraging every subdivision to plan for long term access to two distinct arterial or collector roads. If access is not immediately available, a roadway which can be continued by later adjacent developments shall be provided. Create corridor overlays on major corridors (Wrightsboro Road) for access management, establish minimum frontage and lots sizes for non-residential uses, require interparcel access, establish architectural controls and require planted buffers with street. Designate a bicycle network of existing and proposed on-street and proposed bike facilities Connect major nodes with residential areas through a network of greenways Enforce maximum block lengths within nodes
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue a new major active recreation park in the Grovetown Character Area or nearby Sewer and water extensions are appropriate for the Grovetown Character Area as this is an area the county will be promoting both commercial and residential growth at urbanized densities. Plan for new commercial and/or industrial development in the I-20 Lewiston/Grovetown node by creating a node specific land use plan.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for continuing development in the I-20/Lewiston/Grovetown nodes by conducting a node specific plan in cooperation with the City of Grovetown. Work with the city of Grovetown to create a revitalization, urban design and land use plan for the city's historic center. Publish a map that clearly delineates outer edge of the node, and make this map available to property owners and developers Adopt and develop the nodal land use policy with buffers that provides clear guidance to the appropriate location of commercial, office, and multifamily developments. Encourage the City of Grovetown to adopt the county's nodal development concept. Share best practices on node development policy with the City of Grovetown. Identify and acquire public parking areas; Permit shared parking arrangements within nodes.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and develop the nodal land use policy with buffers that encourages the development of commercial, office, and multifamily developments in the appropriate location. Develop enhanced lighting, signage, landscaping and buffering standards for new non-residential developments in close proximity to existing residential neighborhoods. Create a new mixed-use zoning category and policies for rezoning to this category.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Grovetown Character Area and will be pursued:

- Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
 - Wider roads, expanded sewer and water infrastructure, and new schools may all be necessary to support development in this area. Promoting growth in the Grovetown Character Area will help counter-act the tendency of growth to sprawl out towards the west of Columbia County. The county must collaborate with the city to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place and that the nodal development pattern is adhered to.
- Appropriate Businesses Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
 - Industrial expansion should be consistent with the prime economic sectors of the county, such as manufacturing and light industrial. This is also the most appropriate location for new large-scale commercial development in the county.
- Housing Opportunities Objective: Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.
 - Housing opportunities and prices can be quite diverse in the Grovetown Character Area. Some places may be appropriate for the development of high density workforce housing. Other places within the Grovetown area are suitable for low density residential development. As a location close to the industrial base of the county and Fort Gordon, adequate affordable housing supply is important for this area.

- Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
 - The re-establishment of the center of Grovetown as an historic center for civic, cultural, and commercial activity should be a priority. Historic small towns such as Grovetown are part of the defining character of Columbia County.



Typical Character

- Low density areas serving as transitional areas
- Limited residential
- Predominately undisturbed, forest or agricultural uses

FORT GORDON AREA VISION

The Fort Gordon Area will emphasize agricultural, forest, and rural residential uses to minimize land use conflicts with Fort Gordon.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Forest
- Agriculture
- Industry (278 corridor)
- Institutional
- Residential – Rural
- Recreation – Passive
- Recreation – Active

The character of the Fort Gordon area will have limited residential and will serve as a buffer between Fort Gordon and neighboring areas to ensure the installation maintains its long term viability as a crucial part of the regional economy and the nation's defense infrastructure.

	GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES
1.	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County should continue to coordinate with Ft. Gordon through the Joint Land Use process to ensure encroachment does not occur along the installation boundaries.
2.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Forestry/Rural Residential zone with minimum 5 acre lots. Smaller lots would require urban infrastructure and undermine the rural nature of this area. This should be the dominant zoning category in this area.
3.	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate policies to support the viability of low-population economic uses of the area, such as agriculture or forestry. • Recruit businesses and developments associated with Fort Gordon.
4.	Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No area-specific implementation
5.	Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require minimum 5 acre lots due to poor soil drainage and groundwater recharge area located here. • Develop and enforce a state-mandated groundwater recharge area ordinance • Develop and enforce a state-mandated watershed ordinance.
6.	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No area-specific implementation
7.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public sewer and water extensions should service this area.
8.	Nodal Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No area-specific implementation.
9.	Multifamily & Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited commercial may be encouraged if the development is consistent with recommendations presented in the Joint Land Use Plan for Fort Gordon.

The following Quality Community Objectives apply to the Fort Gordon Character Area and will be pursued:

- Regional Cooperation Objective: Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.
 - Protecting the Fort Gordon by minimizing land use conflicts is an important regional objective. Columbia County should minimize development along the edge of Fort Gordon that has the potential to create such land use conflicts. Fort Gordon is an important regional resource whose value should be preserved.
- Infill Development Objective: Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
 - Limiting development in the Fort Gordon Character Area should help focus development in the nearby towns of Harlem and Grovetown. New residential and commercial development should be focused on these existing towns, and should not spread out between the towns.
 - Also limiting development in the Fort Gordon Character Area will further protect the existing groundwater recharge area.

3.0 Community Issues and Opportunities

3.1 Location of Development

Finding the right place for multifamily housing, industrial and commercial development

Columbia County was originally a bedroom community, and many of its residents would like it to remain a bedroom community. However, at its current size of over 100,000 people, Columbia County cannot viably remain just a bedroom community. For numerous reasons discussed throughout this plan, Columbia County needs diverse development, including multifamily housing, industrial, and commercial developments. The main issue is finding the right place for these types of development, locating these types of development in a way that protects natural resources and the suburban nature of the county. As a physically large and diverse county, there are places which are suitable for multifamily housing, industrial, and commercial development. One of the primary tasks of this plan is to identify the most appropriate locations for these types of development, and to set guidelines for these types of development that will help maintain the suburban character of the county.

3.2 Traffic

Mitigating traffic congestion

Traffic congestion is getting worse in Columbia County, and dealing with traffic congestion is a major concern of the community. Increased traffic congestion is a result of population growth and economic development in the county. Traffic congestion is exacerbated by Columbia County's suburban development pattern with low residential densities, highly separated uses, and dependence on a network of few arterial roads. Transportation alternatives, such as transit, biking, and walking are not currently supported by the county's infrastructure and development patterns.

As Columbia County's population continues to grow, and as economic development continues to come to the county, Columbia County will need to employ the full range of transportation strategies to deal with the increasing traffic. These strategies include denser and mixed use land use arrangements, transportation demand management, transportation system improvements, and road widenings. These strategies are explained further in Columbia County's 2025 Transportation Plan.

3.3 Neighborhood Preservation

Preserving existing single family neighborhoods

Quiet, tree-filled neighborhoods are what attracted many people to Columbia County. The community voiced strong support for protecting these existing neighborhoods.

Incompatible land uses, high traffic volumes, and loss of open space and tree cover are viewed by the community as a threats to the quality of life in existing

neighborhoods. Strong land use planning and appropriate development regulations are needed to protect existing single family neighborhoods.

3.4 School Capacity

Dealing with a lack of capacity in the school system

Due to rapid population growth and high-quality public schools, Columbia County's school system is struggling to keep up with its growing student population. New schools and school renovations are constant, and most schools have trailers to accommodate the overflow of students. Schools in the more developed areas of the county – the Martinez-Evans Character Area – in particular are strained for capacity. Yet Columbia County's school population is expected to continue to grow. Growth for the county and expansion of the Columbia County school system must be coordinated and planned together to make sure schools are able to accommodate this growing student population.

3.5 Environmental Protection

Protecting water resources and sensitive lands

Natural beauty is part of the quality of life of Columbia County. Recreational opportunities, such as fishing along Lake Thurmond or canoeing on the Savannah River, are part of what makes Columbia County a great place to live. Protecting water resources and sensitive lands improves the quality of life for Columbia County residents, and makes economic sense because it prevents expensive mitigation measures that are necessary when environmental degradation occurs. Also, Columbia County is home to some unique environments and endangered species that have a value not just to residents, but to all mankind.

3.6 Nodal Development

Guiding development into a nodal land use pattern to discourage sprawl

Columbia County is experiencing increased strip development and pressures for leapfrog development. Strip development and leapfrog development are unsightly, inefficient, and erode the community character in both suburban and rural areas. Strip development also increases congestion along Columbia County's major roads.

Columbia County has adopted a nodal development pattern to discourage sprawl. The nodal development pattern will designate clear areas for more dense and more intense types of development, while discouraging intense development outside of the nodes. The nodal development pattern is Columbia County's primary strategy for combating sprawl and reinforcing the desired development patterns in the county.

3.7 Greenspace Preservation

Protecting and increasing greenspace throughout the county and where people live.

The community identified this issue as one of prime importance. The community expressed a desire for parks and greenspaces, especially within close proximity of existing neighborhoods. Also, as the county develops, greenspace should be a part of that development. The community expressed the desire to see green integrated into new residential and commercial development, not just addressed as an afterthought to development. New greenways that create the ability to bike or walk away from the roadway were also desired.

Columbia County has taken several steps to address this issue already, with its Greenspace Plan and Tree Protection Ordinance. Continued efforts on both the policy and implementation side are needed.

3.8 Alternative Transportation

Promoting walking and biking as transportation alternatives.

Several stakeholders expressed an interest in enabling people to move around the county by walking and biking. This supports several of the other goals of the county. Transportation by walking and biking takes pressure off of the road system and reduces congestion. Also, greenways for biking and walking create green space that enhances the county's image.

Walking and biking can be promoted several ways. Investments in walking and biking infrastructure can be made as part of the transportation system or as part of an open space system. Also, urban design standards for nodes can promote biking and walking as ways to get around within the nodes.

3.9 Economic Development

Diversifying and sustaining the economic base of the county

Economic development is important for Columbia County to ensure continued prosperity. Currently most residents of Columbia County work in other counties, and many people will continue to work in other counties. Columbia County, however, wants to take a leading role in the economic growth of the region, and to ensure a sufficient industrial and commercial tax base. As such, Columbia County will continue to pursue a growth-oriented economic development strategy.

3.10 Transportation

Getting the maximum benefit out of limited transportation funding.

Transportation dollars are scarce and transportation construction takes a long time. As Columbia County battles increasing congestion, it will be increasingly important for the county to use strategies that provide the greatest return for the dollar. Part of this strategy is to preserve the capacity of the county's arterials by

discouraging strip development, as noted in the nodal development strategy above.

3.11 Housing Standards

Design standards for higher density housing

The need for a greater diversity of housing types, including dense single family housing, townhouses, and apartments, is generally accepted in Columbia County. However the location of higher-density housing must be appropriate and the design of higher-density housing should improve above its current quality. The design quality of current dense residential developments has been a source of complaints for the county. Denser housing types should be of high quality and appealing to broad markets, including the growing senior population in the county. Improved quality dense housing in appropriate locations will also help mitigate the county's problems with traffic.

4.0 Implementation Program

4.1 Short Term Work Program

The following section represents the immediate next steps that the County will take to advance the goals identified in the Growth Management Plan Update. These next steps are considered the Short Term Work Program. The Short Term Work Program covers a five year timeframe and identifies specific actions, the entities responsible for the action, the estimated cost, and potential funding source(s).

It is recommended that the County – Planning and Development Services along with the Growth Management Steering Committee review the Short Term Work Program once a year to assess progress and make adjustments where needed.

SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM									
	Project	Year of Implementation					Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010			
A. GROWTH MANAGEMENT									
1.	Establish an annual review and update period for the STWP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Growth Management Steering Committee & County Commission	Staff time	County
3.	Develop Overlay Guidelines for County nodes and corridors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Consultant	75,000 per area	County
4.	Develop a Unified Development Code (UDC), incorporating zoning, subdivision and site design standards that integrate the principles of the GMP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Consultant	100,000	County
5.	Amend Zoning Ordinance to incorporate the requirement for a site plan at rezoning.	<input type="checkbox"/>					Consultant	See item A4	County
6.	Establish County web page for zoning information, e.g. agendas, procedures, and general zoning information	<input type="checkbox"/>					Planning & Development Services	5,000	County
B. HOUSING									
1.	Revise subdivision regulations to increase interconnectivity within subdivisions, such as paved roads, connectivity between subdivisions and multiple entrances.		<input type="checkbox"/>				Consultant	See item A3	County
2.	As part of the UDC, address land use compatibility and use transition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Consultant	See item A4	County
3.	Develop site and visual design guideline book for multi-family development and manufactured housing.	<input type="checkbox"/>					Consultant	See item A3	County
4.	Develop a Traditional Neighborhood Ordinance to promote pedestrian infrastructure and a variety of housing types.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Consultant	75,000	County
5.	Develop a Rural Residential Zone for large lot development for the rural and conservation character areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Planning & Development Services	Staff time	County

	Project	Year of Implementation					Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010			
C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
1.	Coordinate the installation of public infrastructure such as water, sewer, and roads to ensure they are consistent with the GMP and enhance industrial development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	County with Development Authority	3,000,000	SPLOST Tier I & II
2.	Continue to fund efforts to recruit high quality, clean industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Development Authority & Chamber of Commerce	1,500,000	Private funds & County
3.	Establish a program for coordinating site planning review of adjacent properties within commercial nodes.	<input type="checkbox"/>					Planning & Development Services & Engineering Department	Staff time	County
4.	Initiate the Central Martinez implementation plan – including the improvement district for landscaping, circulation and streetscapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Planning & Development Services & Merchants	2,024,288	County
5.	Implement the Evans Town Center Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	County	Staff time	County
6.	Establish a signage review process and continue to enforce requirements throughout commercial corridors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning & Development Services	Staff time	County
C. HISTORIC RESOURCES									
1.	Assess the need for Historic Preservation responsibility within the County.	<input type="checkbox"/>					Planning & Development Services with Leisure Services	Staff time	County
2.	Update inventory of historic resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>					Leisure Services with Augusta-Richmond Historical Society	Staff time	County
D. NATURAL RESOURCES									
1.	Establish a scenic corridor within the context of the greenway plan linking Wildwood Park and Mistletoe State Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Parks and Recreation	Staff time	County
2.	Use Greenspace acquisition program to integrate open space, plazas and paths within Martinez and Evans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Planning & Development Services with Parks and Recreation	Staff time	County

	Project	Year of Implementation					Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010			
D. NATURAL RESOURCES CONT.									
3.	Develop additional guidelines for development along the lake and river shorelines to increase public access and protect environmentally sensitive areas.		□	□			Planning & Development Services With Consultant	See A4 - UDC	County
4.	Develop and enforce a Department of Natural Resources state-mandated groundwater recharge ordinance.	□					Planning & Development Services and Engineering Department	Staff time	County
5.	Study possible ways to increase public access to Heggies Rock.	□					Parks and Recreation Department with Conservancy	Staff time	County
6.	Revise the Landscape and Tree Conservation Ordinances.		□				Planning & Development Services	Staff time	County
7.	Establish requirements for open space and enhanced landscaping as part of the UDC and Overlays.	□	□	□			Consultant	See A3	County
D. TRANSPORTATION									
1.	Establish additional transportation safety and design standards as part of an Access Management Plan.		□	□			Consultant & Engineering Department	150,000 & Staff time	County
2.	Update development regulations and design standards to reflect GMP goals to support pedestrian and bike access.	□	□				Consultant	See A4 UDC	County
3.	Multi-use trails: Hardy McManus William Few Stevens Creek	□	□	□	□		Parks and Recreation	750,000	County
	Transportation Projects that support nodal development pattern								
4.	William Few Connector from William Few to Hardy McManus	□	□				Engineering Department	Staff time	County
5.	Industrial Park Drive from Washington Road to Evans-to-Locks		□	□			Engineering Department	Staff time	County
6.	Owens/Cox/Gibbs Road from Washington Rd to Washington Rd		□	□			Engineering Department	Staff time	County
7.	Hereford Farm Road from Belair Road to Gibbs Road		□	□			Engineering Department	Staff time	County
8.	I-20/Lewiston Road from Columbia Road to Grovetown			□	□		Engineering Department	Staff time	County

	Project	Year of Implementation					Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES									
1.	Establish a coordinated planning process with the Board of Education where the GMP and school facility plans are reviewed annually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Planning & Development Services with Board of Education	Staff time	County
2.	Create a capital improvement plan that is coordinated with proposed node development.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Planning & Development and Engineering Department	Staff time	County
3.	Upgrade existing parks – parking, equipment, storage, restrooms, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parks & Recreation Department	1,000,000	SPLOST
4.	Examine proposed nodes and identify linkages with the County Greenway Plan.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Planning & Dev. Services / Parks & Recreation Department	Staff time	County
5.	Develop conservation subdivision guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Planning & Development Services	Staff time	County
6.	Wildwood Park - regional conference center/lodge (seed money)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Parks & Recreation Department with Development Authority	1,250,000	County
7.	Stormwater Master Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Engineering Department	Staff time	County
8.	Evans Town Center Park Development (Park Facility)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Engineering Department	\$2,800,000	County
9.	Cares Facility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Leisure Services	300,000	County
10.0	Park Acquisitions: Blackstone Camp Rd Savannah Rapids Canal Head Future Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure Services	4,000,000	County
E. LAND USE									
1.	Establish a review process with municipalities regarding rezonings and infrastructure improvements adjacent to County/city limits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	County and adjacent municipalities	Staff time	County & City
2.	Develop the nodal buffer policy to address the appropriate location of office, commercial, and multifamily development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Planning & Development Services with Consultant	60,000	County
3.	Develop the Greenbrier Town Center Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Consultant	50,000	County
4.	Develop the Rural Appling Node Plan.		<input type="checkbox"/>				Consultant	30,000	County

	Project	Year of Implementation					Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
	<i>Land Use – cont.</i>								
5.	Support the development of the Harlem Area node.	□	□				County	Staff time	County
6.	Support the coordinated development of the Grovetown/Lewiston node.	□	□	□	□	□	Planning & Dev. & Town of Grovetown	Staff time	County & City
7.	Rework Evans Town Center Overlay to incorporate traditional town center principles	□	□				Planning & Development Services	Staff time	County
8.	Develop node guidelines for each node that address land use, design, parking, access management, and green space.	□	□	□	□	□	Consultant & Planning & Development Services	75,000/area	County
9.	Establish mixed-use zoning category to support nodal development options.	□	□				Consultant As part of the UDC	See A4	County

3.3 County Goals Supporting Policies

The following goals and policies represent the more detailed county-wide measures that are intended to ensure the community goals and character elements are reinforced as part of the regular planning efforts of the County. Goals and policies were developed with extensive public participation and reflect the primary issues of concern to Columbia County stakeholders.

Goals articulate what the County wishes to achieve through its Growth Management Plan. Policies are the methods of incentives, coordination, and regulation that help to achieve these goals.

Columbia County has goals addressing the following subjects:

- Coordination with other government entities
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Historic Resources
- Natural Resources
- Transportation
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Nodal Development Concept
- Multifamily Housing and Commercial Development
- Rural Character

The goals and policies from the previous 2020 Growth Management Plan are presented in bold text.

1. Maintain planning mechanisms that ensure coordination with other county departments, local service providers, surrounding municipalities and the general public.
 - 1.1. Coordinate planning and development review with school system Board of Education
 - 1.1.1. The planning department and the Board of Education should include each other in their planning processes and allocate staff to attend key meetings held by the other organization
 - 1.1.2. The planning department should have the opportunity to review and comment on school facility location and expansion plans
 - 1.1.3. School placement should reinforce desirable growth patterns as outlined in the Growth Management Plan
 - 1.1.4. The planning department and the Board of Education should share population projections and projected enrollment data
 - 1.1.5. The planning department and the Board of Education should coordinate on the reuse of former schools sites
 - 1.2. Sewer and water extensions should reinforce desired growth patterns as discussed in the Growth Management Plan

- 1.2.1. Infrastructure extensions should be limited to nodal areas and residential areas developed at urbanized densities. These areas are contained within the Evans-Martinez, Kiokee Creek, and Grovetown Character Areas.
- 1.3. The county should coordinate planning and development review functions with the city governments of Grovetown and Harlem
 - 1.3.1. Cities should be encouraged to consider the County's Growth Management Plan in their development review activities
 - 1.3.2. Columbia County and its cities should engage in a formal cross-review of major development plans and significant rezonings
 - 1.3.3. Columbia County and its cities should communicate and coordinate on planned transportation improvements
- 1.4. Coordinate with Fort Gordon and its management plans
 - 1.4.1. The county should incorporate recommendations from the Fort Gordon Joint Land Use Study into its Growth Management Plan and its ongoing current planning activities
- 1.5. Increase citizen involvement in the planning and development process**
 - 1.5.1. Publish an annual review of approved rezonings**
 - 1.5.2. Conduct an annual meeting of GMP Steering Committee to review progress on the Growth Management Plan and its implementation**
- 2. Diversify the housing stock and provide quality housing opportunities reflecting the variety of lifestyles and life stages of Columbia County residents
 - 2.1. Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible uses and adverse environmental conditions**
 - 2.1.1. Develop enhanced lighting, signage, landscaping and buffering standards for new non-residential developments in close proximity to existing residential neighborhoods
 - 2.2. Promote and encourage residential densities and designs that ensure varied living areas and housing types and an integration of uses**
 - 2.2.1. Adopt the Future Land Use Plan from the Central Martinez Area Study**
 - 2.2.2. Enhance the planned development character of the Kiokee Creek Character Area with the provision of open space and public squares, landscaped medians, protection of trees and an emphasis on Traditional Neighborhood Development in appropriate locations within master planned developments.**
 - 2.2.3. Promote interconnectivity within and between subdivisions to allow the diffusion of traffic patterns**

2.2.4. Require multiple entrances and exits to increase neighborhood connectivity

2.2.5. Develop sidewalk requirements based on residential densities and proximity to nodes

2.3. Address the housing needs of an active aging population

2.3.1. Explore regional and national trends and tools for providing appropriate housing choices for an active aging population

2.4. Require a reasonable portion of all residential development to be set aside for neighborhood-level recreation areas

2.5. Enable people to work near where they live, and live near where they work

2.5.1. Distribute office employment to all of the identified nodes

2.5.2. Require mixed use for large commercial projects

2.5.3. Require mixed use plans for large residential projects

2.6. Increase multi-family housing opportunities

2.6.1. Identify additional land in nodes and between nodes for multi-family housing

2.6.2. Develop appropriate design standards for multi-family housing development that encourage walking and biking and provide recreation opportunities

2.6.3. Increase townhome housing opportunities

2.6.4. Develop appropriate design standards for multi-family and townhouse developments

3. Diversify, strengthen and sustain the economic base of Columbia County consistent with the prudent management of the county's environmental resources and infrastructure

3.1. Encourage the expansion of clean, high tech, quality industrial development that strengthens the economic base of the community and minimizes air, water, and noise pollution.

3.1.1. Identify and set aside appropriate land for new industrial uses

3.1.2. Continue to encourage state funded, quality vocational training to increase the skilled labor force trained for appropriate employment opportunities

3.2. Work with Fort Gordon to identify manufacturing needs that can be locally met

3.3. Encourage growth of medical sector in the county

3.3.1. Market Columbia County as a location for medical sector growth

3.4. Create opportunities for tourism

3.4.1. Consider enhancements to Lake Thurmond and/or Wildwood Park, such as a lodge or retreat center

3.4.2. Coordinate tourist-oriented improvements and marketing with the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area

3.5. Promote small business by increasing regulatory flexibility for home based offices without destroying the residential nature of neighborhoods

3.6. Strengthen coordination and partnership opportunities with adjacent counties

3.7. Monitor the expansion plans, employment growth, and possible reductions in employment at major employers in the region

4. Protect, enhance, and promote the historic identity and resources of Columbia County

4.1. Create an inventory of possible historic properties, their ownership, location, condition, and National Register status

4.1.1. Develop adequate staffing to deal with the implementation of Columbia County's historic preservation goals and policies

4.1.2. Coordinate with State Historic Preservation Office to create plan for identifying and inventorying historic properties

4.1.3. Apply for historic district status where appropriate, such as in Appling.

4.1.4. Apply for National Register status for historic buildings where appropriate

4.2. Develop a protection plan for unique cultural and historic resources of the county

4.2.1. Educate the public about the historic and cultural resources available in the county

4.2.2. Promote adaptive reuse of historic buildings where feasible

5. Protect and nurture the natural environment of Columbia County

5.1. Protect Columbia County's watersheds

5.1.1. Develop and adopt a watershed ordinance that meet Georgia Department of Natural Resource's standards

5.1.2. Restrict development in areas of sensitive soils and areas with poor drainage

5.2. Protect Columbia County's groundwater recharge areas

5.2.1. Develop and adopt a groundwater recharge ordinance that meets Georgia Department of Natural Resource's standards.

5.2.2. Restrict development in areas of sensitive soils and areas with poor drainage

5.3. Pursue Columbia County's planned Greenspace Master Plan, in order to serve recreational needs and protect sensitive lands

5.3.1. Pursue the greenways network identified in Columbia County's Greenspace Master Plan

5.3.2. Purchase and/or protect floodplain lands from development

5.3.3. Provide connections between neighborhoods, nodes, and recreation areas with inter-linked greenways

5.3.4. Coordinate future regional stormwater management solutions within the greenway protection network

5.4. Protect water quality and prevent flooding

5.4.1. Enforce existing soil erosion ordinances

5.4.2. Continue to pursue the development of stormwater management infrastructure

5.4.3. Direct development into appropriate areas and away from inappropriate areas that negatively impact water quality, such as adjacent to streams

5.4.4. Protect and preserve flood-prone and wetland areas

5.5. Protect the tree cover and open space in urbanizing areas of county

5.5.1. Enhance minimum open space requirements for different development types

5.5.2. Review the County's current landscaping and tree conservation regulations to see if they are adequate to limit unnecessary clear cutting and tree removal during the land development process

5.6. Protect scenic corridors that contribute to the County's unique character and aesthetically pleasing image

5.6.1. Identify current scenic corridors that are appropriate for protection

5.6.2. Create a corridor preservation plan for scenic corridors according to public priorities and the guidance of Character Areas from the Growth Management Plan

6. Provide a transportation system that continues to keep pace with growth, mitigates congestion, and integrates various modes of travel in order to allow mobility options, promotes sustainable economic development and protects the natural and cultural resources of Columbia County.

6.1. Make the most efficient use of limited transportation funds

6.1.1. Concentrate commercial uses to nodes at the intersections of major roads

6.1.2. Use access management within corridors to decrease congestion and increase safety. Develop corridor-specific access management plans on currently congested corridors such as Washington Road

6.1.3. Install medians along major roadway-corridors to increase capacity and safety

- 6.1.4. **Develop a functional road classification system that provides guidelines for future right-of-way requirements and land use decisions. The functional plan should include number of lanes, land uses, and transportation capabilities of the roadway**
- 6.1.5. **Coordinate transportation facilities and services to coincide with development plans and demands**
- 6.1.6. **Plan and program transportation improvement projects to coincide with planned development within nodes**
- 6.1.7. **Pursue stable sources of transportation funding to maximize joint funding opportunities with the Georgia Department of Transportation**
- 6.2. Decrease congestion along major arterials
 - 6.2.1. **Use access management for strip commercial development along arterial roadways. Discourage single lot access and enforce a minimum distance between curb cuts for commercial and professional land uses**
 - 6.2.2. Increase internal connectivity by providing a network of local roads that create an alternative to using major arterial roads
 - 6.2.3. Increase inter-parcel connectivity of all new commercial and residential development to create alternate routes to major destinations
 - 6.2.4. Increase mixed use in nodes and corridors
- 6.3. Increase pedestrian and bike travel options
 - 6.3.1. Increase pedestrian and bike access for county-wide travel
 - 6.3.1.1. **Promote bikeway and pedestrian systems that connect from residential areas to nodal developments**
 - 6.3.1.2. Establish a formal network of designated bicycle and pedestrian pathways throughout the County. The County's planned Greenway system should be part of this network
 - 6.3.1.3. **Pursue pedestrian and bike facilities alongside major thoroughfares and designated corridors. Require new development on major corridors to provide these facilities where feasible**
 - 6.3.1.4. **Require new development to connect to the County's existing and planned greenway, pedestrian, and bicycle system.**
 - 6.3.1.5. **Require sidewalks in higher density subdivisions, and encourage sidewalks in all developments**
 - 6.3.2. Increase pedestrian and bike access within multi-use nodes
 - 6.3.2.1. Pursue a comprehensive pedestrian network within nodal developments
 - 6.3.2.2. Enforce maximum block lengths in nodes

- 6.3.2.3. Establish minimum bike parking requirements for all commercial within nodes. For example, require one bike space per 20 parking spaces
- 6.3.2.4. Encourage reduced and/or shared parking requirements within nodal developments
- 6.3.2.5. Designate and develop safe street crossings for both minor roads and arterials within nodes.

6.4. Provide adequate infrastructure and designate truck routes in order to prevent truck traffic in residential areas

6.5. Decrease commuter traffic by promoting alternatives to commuting

- 6.5.1. Promote telecommuting with employers and employees within the County**
- 6.5.2. Promote live-work arrangements and flexibility for home-based offices**

7. Ensure the provision of community facilities and services following the nodal development pattern that supports efficient growth and will protect and enhance the quality of life for existing and future residents of Columbia County

7.1. Make the most efficient use of public funds through long term planning and coordination

- 7.1.1. Encourage early land reservation by the County and the Board of Education to minimize land costs and obtain the best sites**
- 7.1.2. Encourage early land reservation by the County's Greenspace Master Plan to minimize land costs and obtain future park sites**
- 7.1.3. Provide advance planning analysis and cost estimates for transportation projects to maximize State and Federal monies for road projects**

7.2. Increase community services for the growing senior population

- 7.2.1. Identify the demand for expanded programs at existing senior centers**
- 7.2.2. Monitor the ridership and future demand for senior transportation services**
- 7.2.3. Coordinate service delivery to seniors through the Area Agency on Aging**
- 7.2.4. Identify and implement health and wellness programs in cooperation with the major hospitals in the region**

7.3. Create a system of accessible open spaces that serves various recreational needs of county residents

- 7.3.1. Make the greenway plan an integral part of the County's land use plan**

- 7.3.2. **Develop a connected greenway along creek basins with public access points to Lake Thurmond, the Savannah River, and Augusta Canal**
- 7.3.3. **Develop public/private partnerships to maintain neighborhood parks**
- 7.3.4. **Enable and encourage Conservation Neighborhoods that would allow reduced lot sizes in order to protect valuable open space assets and environmentally fragile areas**
- 7.4. Enhance the character and livability of nodes
 - 7.4.1. Implement design standards for the Central Martinez Area from the Central Martinez Area Study
 - 7.4.2. Encourage pedestrian connections within nodes and between nodes and between neighborhoods and nearby schools
 - 7.4.3. Develop design overlays for nodes to establish a unique identity using architectural guidelines, sidewalk requirements, street trees, lamps, street furniture and other urban design features
 - 7.4.4. Construct portions of the nodal overlay design improvements as an incentive for future development
 - 7.4.5. Require new developments to meet the design overlay standards within the nodes
 - 7.4.6. **Enhance the urban character of nodes with the provision of small open spaces and public squares within development, the protection of trees and the promotion of landscaped medians**
- 7.5. Invest in new infrastructure to encourage the nodal development pattern and discourage sprawl
 - 7.5.1. Prioritize public facilities and capital improvements within the nodes
 - 7.5.2. Encourage expansion of water and sewer in planned nodal development areas in order to discourage sprawl into rural areas
 - 7.5.3. Create a Capital Improvement Program that prioritizes projects based on the Growth Management Plan and funds capital improvements with consideration for adequate operation and maintenance costs prior to expansion of community facilities
 - 7.5.4. Review and update the Short Term Work Program annually in conjunction with the budgeting process
 - 7.5.5. Locate public facilities according to the need, population density, accessibility and compatibility with adjacent uses and guidance from the Growth Management Plan and Central Martinez Area Study

8. Focus and direct future growth and development in clearly identified nodes, thereby maximizing the efficient and economical provision of county services and discouraging sprawl throughout the county, while maintaining existing neighborhoods and preserving the rural character prevalent in the western half of the county.
 - 8.1. Discourage commercial development between identified nodes
 - 8.1.1. Enforce greater regulatory requirements and less flexibility for commercial development outside of nodes than for commercial development inside of nodes
 - 8.1.2. Increase buffering requirements for properties between nodes
 - 8.1.3. Require minimum parcel size and minimum frontage for commercial development between nodes to discourage small parcels from becoming developed for commercial use
 - 8.1.4. Require minimum distance between driveways (access management) for commercial development between nodes
 - 8.1.5. Require interparcel access between commercial developments
 - 8.1.6. On a case-by-case basis, allow for single family homes on major arteries to be converted to office or high density housing. Individual properties should be evaluated based on their proximity to a node and the impact on surrounding residential homes.
 - 8.1.7. Negotiate downzoning from commercial to non-commercial zoning outside of nodes where feasible
 - 8.1.8. Extensions of water and sewer between planned nodal areas should be provided to serve predominantly residential uses
 - 8.2. Provide incentives for development within nodes
 - 8.2.1. Provide incentives for shared parking and additional density
 - 8.2.2. Consider providing limited County funding to share infrastructure costs for appropriate development within nodes
 - 8.2.3. Consider tax increment funding to help spark redevelopment in nodal areas targeted for redevelopment
 - 8.3. Reduce intense development outside nodes
 - 8.3.1. Use the buffer policy to reinforce nodal growth pattern. The buffer policy discourages competing commercial development near the edge of an established node, thus focusing commercial development within the node
 - 8.3.2. Implement an access management program which will reduce the ease of driveway access on major arterials between nodes

8.4. Make planned nodal developments pedestrian friendly and encourage circulation patterns that do not depend solely on arterial circulation

8.4.1. Require wide sidewalks with setbacks from the street, and encourage active uses adjacent to the sidewalks.

8.4.2. Increase pedestrian infrastructure

8.4.3. Require short block lengths within the nodes

8.4.4. Require large parking lots to be subject to the block size requirements and provide internal circulation

8.4.5. Require buildings to be street-oriented along internal streets where appropriate

8.4.6. Reduce parking requirements for individual uses that include shared or joint parking areas within the planned development

8.4.7. Allow on-street parking in designated areas

8.4.8. Require identification of pedestrian access between parcels and to and from greenways with all site plans within a node.

8.4.9. Require commercial areas to provide internal circulation systems

8.5. Develop enhanced design and site development standards for all types of development, including landscaping, buffering, screening, site placement, and sidewalks

8.6. Create urban design standards for nodes to promote pedestrian friendly development and high quality public spaces

8.6.1. Establish usable open space requirements for development in nodes

8.6.2. Establish landscaping, buffering, and tree protection requirements in key nodes and corridors

8.6.3. Establish signage controls as necessary for key nodes and corridors

8.6.4. Develop a recommended timing plan with measurable milestones for the implementation of nodal infrastructure

8.6.5. Require that a site plan be submitted for all applications during the construction permit process

9. Locate multifamily housing and commercial developments following the nodal development policy so that they are compatible and complementary with the existing community fabric

9.1. Encourage all future commercial and office development to be located in identified nodes

9.1.1. Refer to the future development map to identify the County's preferred locations for commercial development

9.1.2. Expedite approval for commercial developments in nodes as compared to commercial developments outside nodes.

9.1.3. Encourage and permit reduced parking requirements for commercial development through shared parking, public

parking, or through improved estimates of actual parking demand

- 9.1.4. Increase allowable buildable area in nodes by more lenient requirements for building footprint and/or height within nodes.

- 9.2. Locate multifamily development primarily in Tier I and Tier II nodes and secondarily along major arterials.

- 9.3. Encourage land use transitions between more intensive, commercial and industrial land uses, and less intensive, residential land uses.

- 9.3.1. Promote multifamily residential, office, and institutional as transitions between commercial and single family

- 9.3.2. Require appropriate buffers where different land uses abut one another

9.4. Encourage mixed use development within nodes

- 9.4.1. Encourage and permit reduced parking requirements for mixed-use development through shared parking, public parking, or through improved estimates of actual parking demand

9.5. Encourage large land holdings to plan for multiple uses

- 10. Preserve the existing rural and conservation character prevalent in the western area of the county

- 10.1. Discourage intense development in rural character areas

- 10.1.1. Limit extension of water and sewer services to these areas at public cost

- 10.1.2. Focus infrastructure spending on existing urbanized areas and nodes

- 10.1.3. Focus new government facilities on existing urbanized areas and nodes

- 10.2. Pursue historic preservation and identification in rural areas where appropriate

- 10.3. Limit commercial areas in rural areas to defined rural nodes

- 10.4. Develop rural design guidelines for key corridors, such as form based codes

- 10.5. Protect environmentally sensitive lands through implementation of Columbia County's Greenspace Master Plan

- 10.6. Evaluate the costs and benefits of implementing a transferable development rights program to protect important natural lands, agricultural lands, and forestry lands